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#2

THE ETERNAL™

PARENTAL ADVISORY EXPLICIT CONTENT



KEV

THE ETERNAL







IKAEDEN



KURASSUS



JESKA

PREVIOUSLY...

A race of immortal beings known as the Celestials have dominion over all life in the galaxy. For thousands of years, the Celestials have enslaved another race of beings, the Eternals, and sent them from world to world to mine each planet of its natural resources. The Eternals use genetically modified local fauna -- which they refer to as "deviants" -- for the actual physical labor.

The Eternals have now come to Earth at the dawn of man, and using genetic resequencing technology, have transformed some of the local pre-human hominids into deviants that, rather surprisingly, resemble the Eternals themselves.

Because the Celestials destroyed all female Eternals, many of the Eternals begin using female deviants to satisfy their sexual appetites. Most Eternals treat their deviants well, including Ikaeden, the Eternal leader. But another Eternal, the second-in-command Kurassus, is not nearly so charitable toward his deviant slaves, treating them like animals and disposable sex toys.

But the Celestials have forbidden on pain of death the procreation of an Eternal and a deviant -- and they have also forbidden that a deviant be taught to speak.

Ikaeden has used a mental imprinting device called The Apple to teach his deviant servant Jeska to comprehend language, though not to speak it. Trouble begins, though, when Jeska uses The Apple to teach herself to speak. It is an offense for which she must die...

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HIGH ABOVE THE SURFACE OF THE PLANET.

TWELVE MONTHS AFTER FIRST CONTACT.

Agrimet.
A word?

More than *one* would be appreciated, Kurassus.
These deviants aren't much in the way of conversation.

Well, that's the point, isn't it?
The Celestials don't want them evolving beyond their station--
--and having the intellect to manage complex language would be the first step.

Besides, it would only make them more obstinate and difficult.

It was a joke, Kurassus.
After all these thousands of years, I think we all know quite well the reasons for keeping the deviants stupid and pliable.

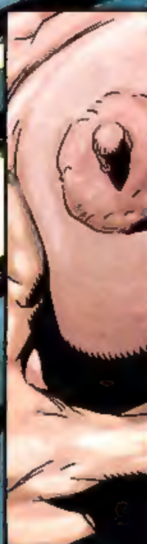
You *would think* we were all quite well aware of that, wouldn't you?
And yet Ikaeden has allowed his female intermediary access to the Apple.
She can converse as well as you or I.

No.
You must be mistaken, Kurassus.
No one knows the Celestial edicts better than Ikaeden, and no one follows them more diligently--
--or enforces them more stringently.

Ikaeden is incapable of breaking those rules.
Especially for a deviant female. He would *never* teach one of *them* to talk.





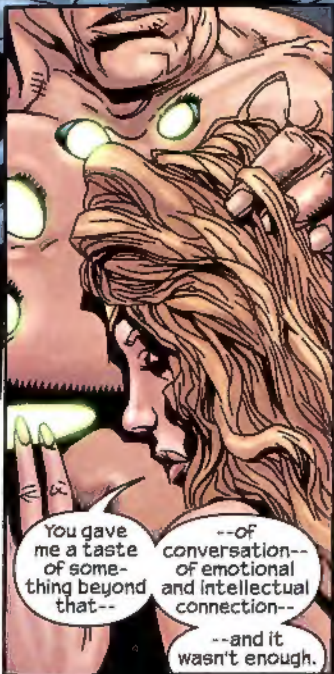
Oh, YES, Ikaeden!
HARDER!


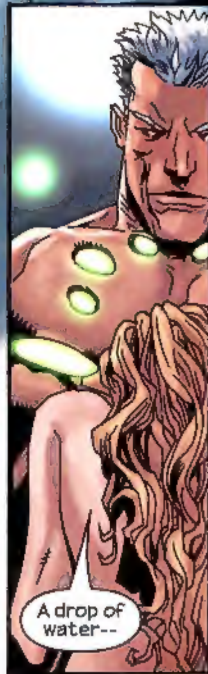



AAAAHH!
Yeeeees.
Oh--you're amazing.
I love it when you're inside me.

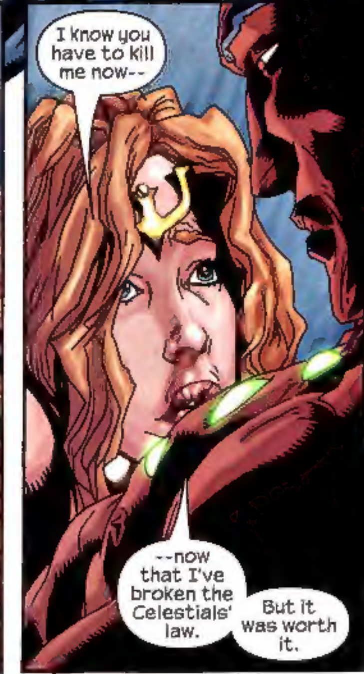

I know this, uh--
I know the *rules,* Ikaeden.
I know this can't last, and that what I've done--
--making myself intelligent, teaching myself your language--
--that it means *death.*


But, you understand, I *had* to do it.
The need to speak to you--to understand you on more than just a rudimentary level--
--I don't know. I couldn't stop myself.
You had awakened me to an understanding that my "existence" before was so--
--empty.
So harsh, and painful, and difficult.


You gave me a taste of some-thing beyond that--
--of conversation--of emotional and intellectual connection--
--and it wasn't enough.


A drop of water--


--a hint of moisture to a thirsting woman.


I know you have to kill me now--
--now that I've broken the Celestials' law.
But it was worth it.

A sacrifice I gladly make for these past hours of pleasure with you.





LATER, OUTSIDE THE ETERNALS' SPACESHIP...

Ho, Ikaeden.

I haven't seen you in a few days, now.

Everything is well with you, I trust?

Everything is fine, Kurassus.

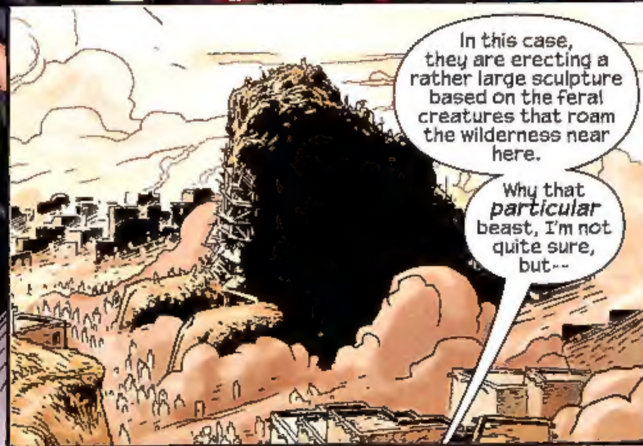
Agrimet.

I trust the Deviant City construction has continued uneventfully in my absence?

You have to ask?

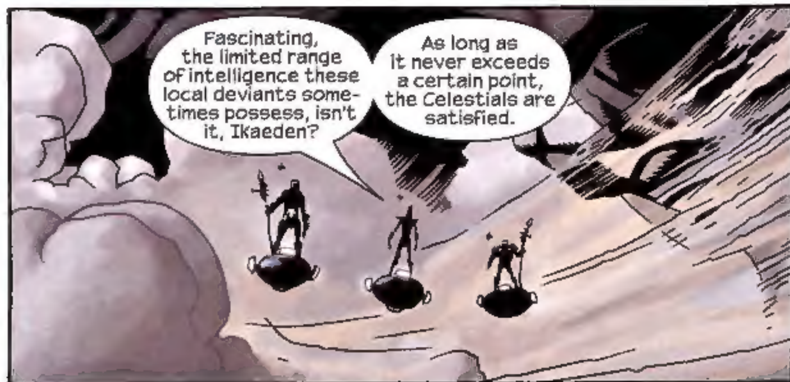
No, I suppose I don't. Every-thing looks fine.
But what is the creature being assembled over there?
A rather large *animal,* I'm afraid.
As so often happens with these deviants, they have begun to worship us as gods.

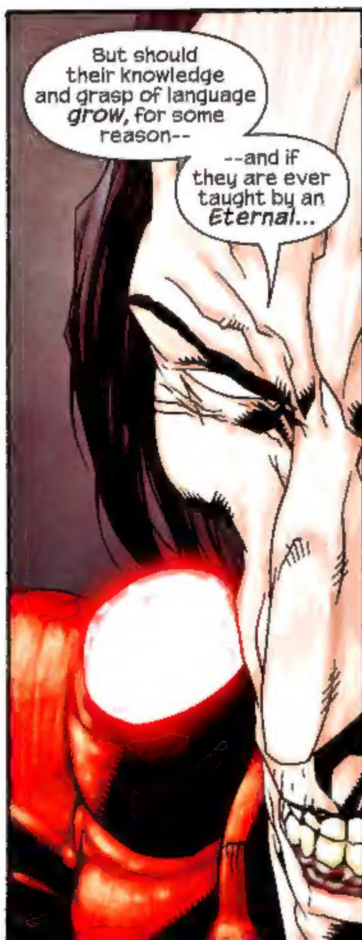

Making offerings, building temples.
The usual.


In this case, they are erecting a rather large sculpture based on the feral creatures that roam the wilderness near here.
Why that *particular* beast, I'm not quite sure, but--


It probably has to do with the star we originally came from.
I pointed it out to some of the deviants trying to explain the concept of our "homeworld."
Apparently, they think the formation of our star, coupled with nearby stars, resembles this thing they call a "lion."
I see, Agrimet.
So you were trying to teach them *language?*


No, I--
Of course not. I would never.


Fascinating, the limited range of intelligence these local deviants some-times possess, isn't it, Ikaeden?
As long as it never exceeds a certain point, the Celestials are satisfied.


But should their knowledge and grasp of language *grow,* for some reason--
--and if they are ever taught by an *Eternal...*


You have a *point* to make, Kurassus?


I don't know, Ikaeden.
Do I?


Ikaeden, I didn't--
It was just a moment of *interaction.* That's all--
Don't wet yourself, Agrimet.
Ikaeden understands accidental transgression, don't you, Ikaeden?

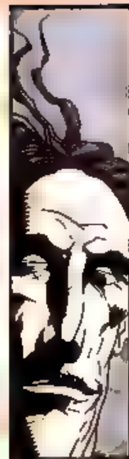

And have you managed to find the time to *eliminate* your presumptuous deviant *aide* yet, Ikaeden?
I'd be willing to do that for you, if you find the task too--
--I don't know--
--*distasteful.*


That is--
--*assuming,* of course, *that* you haven't managed it yourself *already.*

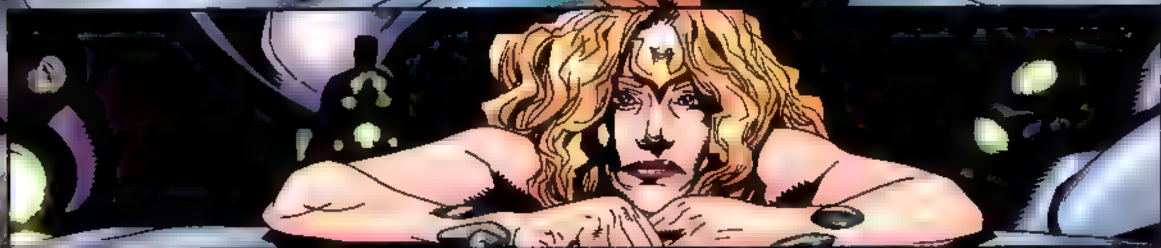








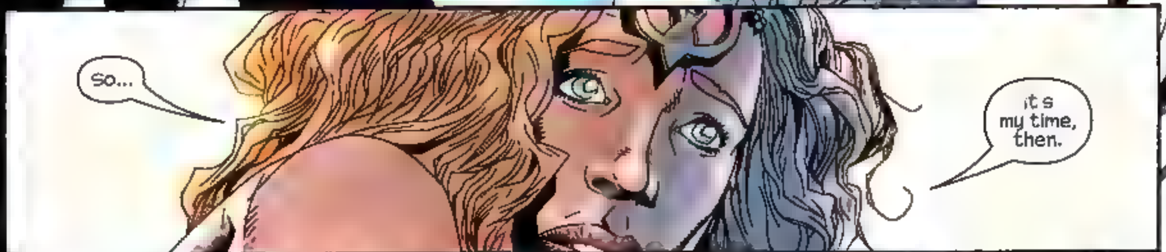
IKAEDEN'S QUARTERS...





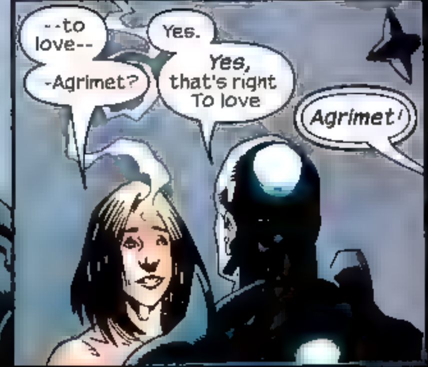





So...
it's my time, then.


IN THE RE-SEQUENCING CHAMBER...
Trust me.
You trust me, right? Trust Agrimet.
This won't hurt you, and you'll be happy once it's complete.
We both will.


Ikaeden has done it with his woman, and it's worked fine. Once this is done, we'll be able to talk and--
--you know, to--


--to love--
Yes.
--Agrimet?
Yes, that's right. To love.
Agrimet!

You stand accused of treason against the Celestials, our lords, and will be punished with all due prejudice!

I knew you would fold.

It is truly sad that the male of our species is so weak--

--so *foolish* and weak--

--that they need conversation more than physical gratification.

We provide you with *all* the females you could desire--and *yet*

--contrary to common sense and all Celestial law--

--you insist on making your women intelligent.

Conversant.

Defiant.

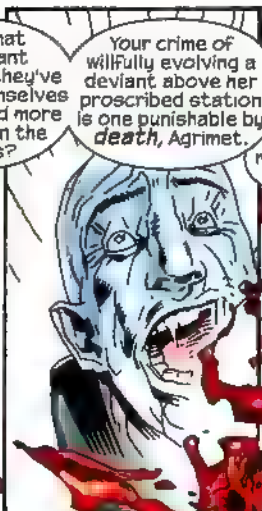
Why?

Some of us need *more* than just a *physical* connection, Kurassus.

Not all of us are inhumane *sadists* like our second-in-command.

You realize, of course, that I do not consider "inhumane sadist" an insult.

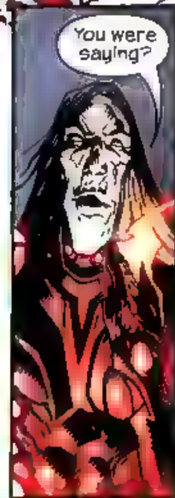

Why is it that men who want to talk after they've pleasured themselves are considered more "humane" than the rest of us?


Your crime of willfully evolving a deviant above her proscribed station is one punishable by *death*, Agrimet.
I understand my transgression and accept my fate.
But please, don't harm the--







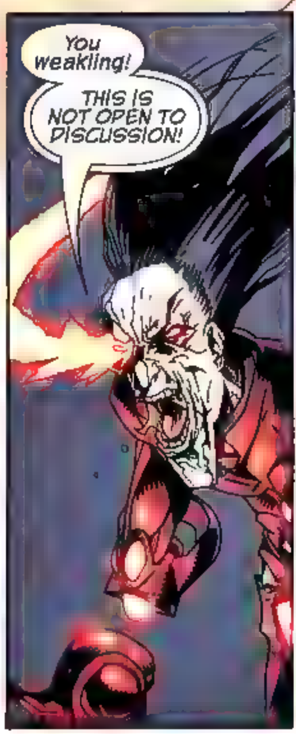

You were saying?

Make this clean and easy, Agrimet!

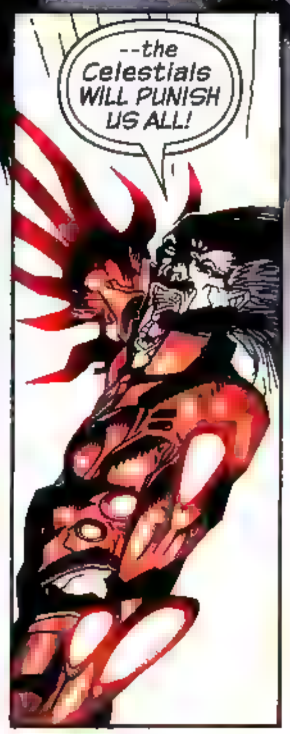
Die as befits an Eternal!

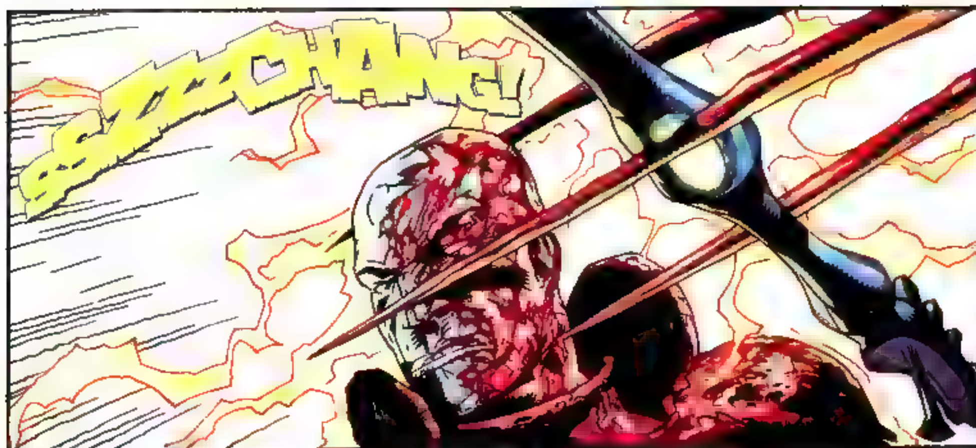
Kurassus, wait.



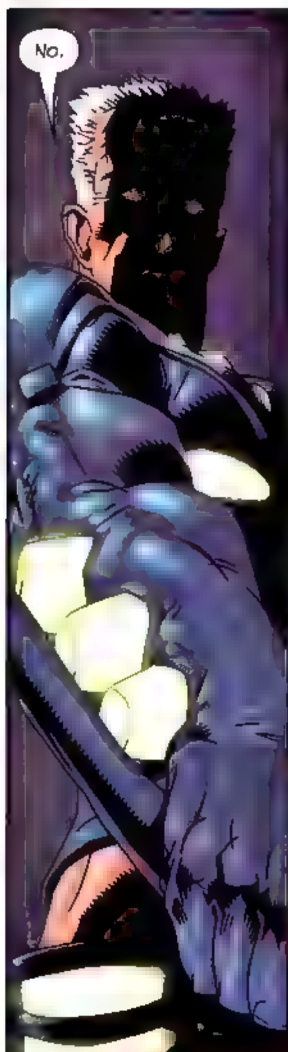












IKAAAAAEDEN--
--YOU ALLOW HIM TO DEFY CELESTIAL LAW!?
We will not *defy* Celestial law, Kurassus.
But we will *amend* it.









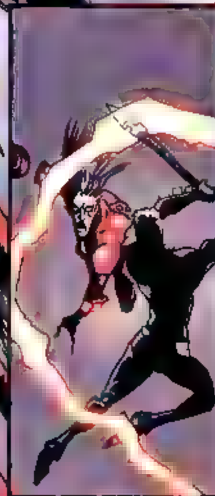


YOU WOULD KILL US ALL!


KZZAAASH

NOOOO!!!

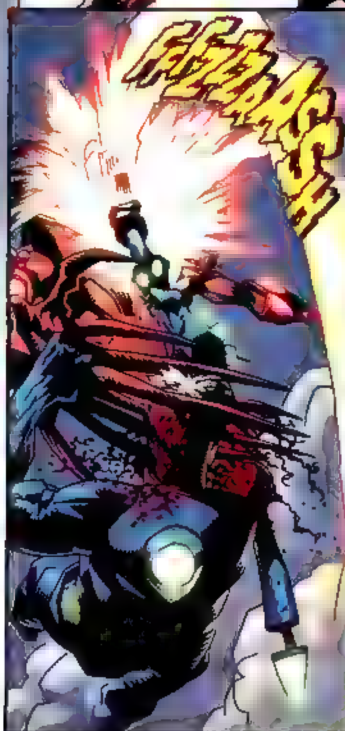

AAAAAHHH!!!



IKAEDEN,
NO!

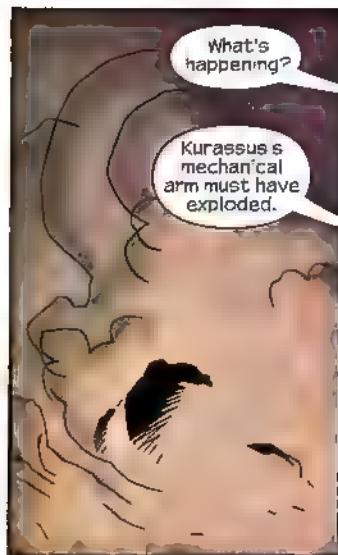
SHLACK
AAAAH!


NNGGGH!!!



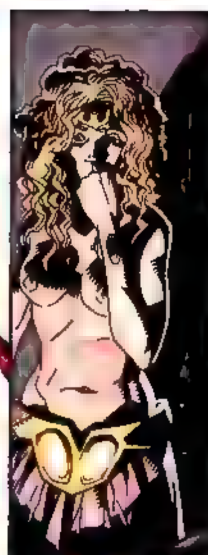

Did Ikaeden just cut Kurassus in half?
We should stop this.


Are they both dead?


What's happening?
Kurassus's mechanical arm must have exploded.


They both have been killed.


No, wait




SHLUCK


I put it to a vote.
How many are with me?

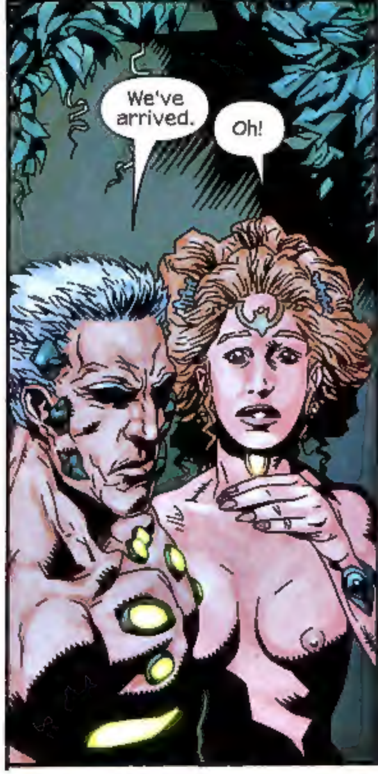





THIRTEEN MONTHS AFTER FIRST CONTACT
Come on.
You're so slow.


I'm not slow. I'm just pacing my-self.
Not all of us can be as energetic as the gods.


I keep telling you, Jeska, I am *not* a god.
You are when we make love.
How many more flights do we have to climb?
None. This is the roof.

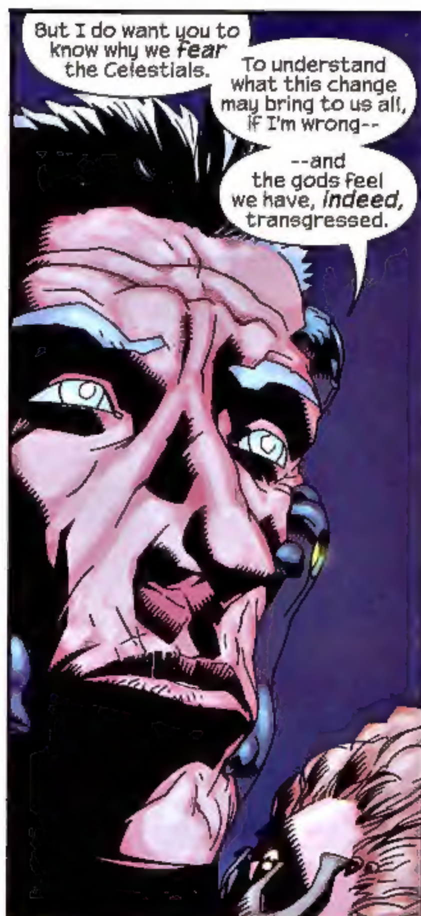

We've arrived.
Oh!

A *garden!*


It took some work keeping it a secret from you during construction.
Do you like it?
You mean--
--it's for *me*?


Of course, Jeska.
It's all yours.
It's *magnificent,* Ikaeden.
Thank you *so* much.
You're *so* welcome.
Something to commemorate what you've brought to *me.*
What you've brought to *all* Eternals.


What have I brought you, Ikaeden?
Death at the hands of the gods?
You've brought us more life than you can imagine.


But I do want you to know why we *fear* the Celestials.
To understand what this change may bring to us all, if I'm wrong--
--and the gods feel we have, *indeed,* transgressed.


Do you see that star just to the right of the pyramid's beam?
Yes.
The brightest one, you mean?
That one. Yes.


That is actually a *world,* Jeska.
A *planet.*
The next world over from this one, with as many inhabitants, if not more.


We were *there* before we came *here,* many millennia ago.
We allowed the deviant slaves we left behind to advance them-selves.
To evolve and civilize, rather than exterminate them as we were told.


Recently, the Celestials returned to judge that world--
--those *evolved* "people"--
--as they once judged mine and may again if we continue down the path you and I have begun.


As long as we don't *breed*--
As long as we don't attempt to *civilize*, I don't think they will--
Ikaeden.


I'm pregnant.
TO BE CONTINUED